

the Cornerstone

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | WESTFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | AN ECO CONGREGATION
DECEMBER 2023— JANUARY 2024



Shine Jesus' Light

Special events for our children and families highlight Advent and Christmas at Westfield.

- by Jennifer Griffith, Director of Children's Ministries

Annual Program

Get ready to shine Jesus' light this Christmas through *Stellar Christmas*! Our annual children's Christmas program is December 17 at 11:00 A.M. This year's program is sure to brighten our church family's Christmas season. We will be incorporating our Bible buddies from this past summer's Stellar VBS, as well as some of our favorite songs. Together we will hear the story of Christmas retold by members of the starry host who were twinkling the night Jesus was born, and we will sing a couple classic Christmas carols as we celebrate his birth. Prepare for lots of merry music and memorable moments as we celebrate Jesus - the light of the world!

Happy Birthday Jesus!

Kids and their families are invited to a birthday party for Jesus at 9:45 A.M. on December 10 in the Fellowship Hall. There will be activities, a lesson, and of course, cake. This year's party theme is "Gifts for Jesus" so be thinking about what will you give Jesus this Christmas? Hope you can join us! Following the party, we will have a rehearsal for the Stellar Christmas program.

Pizza Project Night

On Wednesday, December 6, at 5:30 P.M. join us for pizza and a chance to make cards for the [Christmas flower mission](#). This is a fun intergenerational activity that serves our community. Sign up now!

Christmas Caroling

Share the gift of fellowship and song with your Westfield family on Sunday, December 10 as we visit some of our shut-ins and others who are unable to get out and about during this Christmas season.

A light lunch will be provided for those who plan to participate. Following lunch, around 1:00, we will carpool out into the community for some good old fashioned caroling. Be sure to dress accordingly!



Step Forward

by Pastor Bobby

I am looking out the office window here at Westfield and there is snow! It reminds me that this is the time our hearts turn towards the joyous season of Christmas, a time of family gatherings, cherished traditions, and the heartwarming spirit of giving. Amidst the twinkling lights and festive cheer, we have this time where we retell the nativity story, a tale of hope, love, and the promise of new beginnings.

The Christmas season is a time to cherish the memories we hold dear – the excitement of children opening presents, the aroma of freshly-baked cookies, and the warmth of loved ones gathered around

the table. These traditions, passed down through generations, bind us together, creating a tapestry of shared experiences that define the essence of our family and community. We are blessed to experience this together in worship where we sing songs of Jesus' birth, take communion together, and worship.

Yet, as the year draws to a close and a New Year beckons, we are reminded of the inevitability of change and the call to embrace the unknown. Just as the magi followed the guiding star towards the newborn king, we are invited to embark on a journey of our own, guided

by the light of faith and the promise of new beginnings.

In the Bible, we are reminded that *“old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). This verse echoes the sentiment of the New Year, a time for renewal and transformation. As we bid farewell to the year gone by, we carry with us the lessons learned, the triumphs celebrated, and the challenges faced. These experiences, both joyful and difficult, have shaped our character and prepared us for the path that lies ahead.

The New Year is a blank canvas, an opportunity to set new goals, rekindle old dreams, and embrace the possibilities that await. With faith as our compass and love as our guiding light, we

step into the unknown with courage and determination. As we celebrate Christmas and welcome the New Year, let us remember the words of Isaiah 43:19: *“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

May this season of joy and renewal inspire us to cherish our traditions, embrace the unknown, and press forward with renewed faith and hope, knowing that God is with us every step of the way.



Bible Quiz

Elizabeth, an older relative of Mary the mother of Jesus, was miraculously pregnant at the same time as Mary. What was the name of Elizabeth's husband?

- A. Aaron
- B. Zechariah
- C. Joseph
- D. Simeon



Answer: B (See Luke 1:5, 39-41.)

February Blood Drive

Please mark your calendar for Wednesday, February 7. That is the day of our Red Cross Blood Drive. Visit redcrossblood.org today and find our day and location to schedule your appointment.

If you'd like to volunteer to greet, provide refreshments, or learn more, please contact coordinator Lee Ann Martin.



Bringing Back a Tradition

Many of us remember the magic of the live nativity in the church parking lot. The choir singing, the glow of the luminaries, the live actors and animals. We are bringing it back, but with a “community twist.” Enjoy this walk-through event set for December 22 from 7-9 P.M. at Kennedy Park in Bessemer. MoCo House will be serving free hot cocoa.



LIVE NATIVITY—DEC 22
Kennedy Park, Bessemer

Thankful Feast

Thanksgiving Break (feast) was lots of fun! We gathered to give thanks to God for all his blessings, played some games, and ate yummy food. Thank you to all who came and helped.



Ponderings at the End of a Day—or Year

Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: “Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone’s face? Did I say words of healing?” Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: “How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others’ faces? Did I offer words of healing?” Nouwen continued, and we can too: “Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?”

Many of us set New Year’s resolutions for self-improvement, asking, “What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?” But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: “These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come.” His resolution was to share God’s love with others. With God’s help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.



This time of year can be a mix of emotions that make it a challenge. We invite you for a service of reflection, comfort and hope for hurting hearts near the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. Please join us at 6 P.M. on Friday, December 22.



Margie Benson
Carriage Manor

Janet Davis
at her residence

Bonnie Ernst
Masternick Memorial

Ann Fox
at her residence

Bob Kenny
at his residence

Eileen Mateer
The Grove—New Castle

Hazel Pence
Quality of Life—New Castle

Making the Most of Ordinary Time

In liturgical churches, more than half of the church-year calendar is labeled as Ordinary Time. Although that merely means the weeks are designated by ordinal numbers (*First Sunday after the Epiphany*, etc.), people may assume that “ordinary” means not special, or not a church holiday.

Ordinary gets a bad rap, but it represents the bulk of daily life. Not all days contain mountaintop experiences that

warrant Facebook posts. Yet “simple, consistent, sometimes boring faithfulness” can lead to out-of-the-ordinary results, according to blogger Karl Vaters. “When you’re following God’s will for your life and you string a bunch of ordinary but necessary actions together, extraordinary things can happen,” he writes at ChristianityToday.com.

Likewise, although Christians may strive to be radical, out-of-the-ordinary followers of Jesus, everyday discipleship leaves a powerful legacy. In *The Ordinary Christian Life*, pastor Michael Horton extols the value of “the regular preaching of Christ from all of the Scriptures, baptism, the Supper, the prayers of confession and praise, and all of the other aspects of ordinary Christian fellowship.” He says the result of participating in “the ordinary life of the covenant community” is quite extraordinary: “steady maturation in Christ.”

—adapted from *The Wired Word*

Faithfulness:
God’s Goals +
Ordinary Actions =
Extraordinary
Results



Delivering Joy

by Jessie Yauch, Director of Senior Adult Ministries

The Month of December is a joyous month of wonderful memories to be made. While baking, cooking, planning parties and going out buying special gifts, we become more generous and hopefully more kind towards one another. We shouldn’t forget about our loved ones or older neighbors who are not able to join us in our homes as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sending cheer gives a sense of being remembered and feeling loved, so send a card with a small note or a prayer.

During the first two weeks in December we will be making Christmas cards for The Christmas Flower Mission. December 21 is our Christmas Party and we will celebrate with a white elephant gift exchange (between \$5 and \$10). For those who signed up, our

JOY cookie exchange will be a lot of fun.

Don’t let the hustle and bustle stress you out. Jesus is the reason for the season! Be thankful to our Lord and reflect what His birth means to all.

Join us for a fun couple of hours on Thursdays. All are welcome 50 and older. Exercise is at 11 A.M. and lunch is at noon, followed by fellowship and activities.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Luke 2:10 — And the angel said unto them, “Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

Text Alerts and Mobile Giving

Text Alerts:

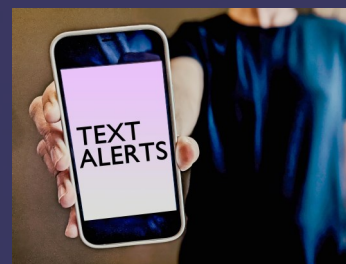
Text “Westfield” to “94000” to receive church news and events.

Text “ICanHelp” to “94000” to be added as a Westfield volunteer.

Text “JoinYO” to “94000” to be added to YO! messaging.

Mobile Giving:

Visit the App Store or Google Play to download the Vanco Mobile app for free. Please contact the church office with questions. Thank you!



Shoebox Voyage

*The Journey of a Shoe Box
by Deborah Replogle*



It begins with you packing a box or donating money for items and postage. The next stop is the back of my truck or trailer. Melvin and I take them to Calvary Independent Church in New Castle where they are unloaded, stacked, counted, and prayed over by the volunteer workers there.

After being packed in large boxes and loaded on a box truck, the next stop is New Life Baptist Church in New Wilmington. Workers there load the boxes on semi trailers that travel to a warehouse in Boone, NC or Baltimore, MD. Once at the warehouse, they go through an assembly line. The first worker takes out any checks or money and it goes directly into a lock box. The next set of workers remove liquids, toothpaste, or any other items not allowed. If a box is lacking in content, they will add some toy to it. It's then taped shut and packed into another large box.

From there boxes travel all over the world. Some arrive at their destination on camels, motorcycles, yaks, canoes, wagons, or even on the back of a hiker. Most of the children will be coming to church for the first time and receiving a present for the first time. They are invited to a Bible study that teaches them about Jesus. They take their lessons home and expose the rest of the family to Jesus, and the next thing you know, that child is a teacher, and a church is established. This is how the Good News is spread! See what your box can accomplish!

Interested in working a shift in NC or MD in November? Visit the Samaritan's Purse Christmas shoe box site. The shifts go fast so you have to sign up as soon as they open for enrollment.

Thanks so much to everyone who made the 239 boxes possible. I know the postage is expensive, and the cost of items has gone up. That's what makes the 239 boxes so fantastic. You show you care no matter the inconvenience!





Westfield and Community Events

◆Saturday, December 2

Breakfast with Santa

9:00 A.M. at Mohawk Elementary

Enjoy light breakfast, crafts, coloring, and a visit with Santa. Benefits Mohawk Area Educational programs. \$2.50/\$3.00

Open House at MoCo!

4-5 P.M. Celebrating 10 years in our community! Light snacks and (of course) great coffee!



◆Sunday, December 3

Sunday School

9:45 A.M. at Westfield

Advent Worship: HOPE

11:00 A.M. at Westfield



Christmas Post Office

Open for your cards and greetings for Westfield members and friends on December 3, 10, 17, and 24.

◆Monday, December 4

Advent Study—Habakkuk

7:00 P.M. at Westfield. Go deeper into the weekly sermon text in this 3-week study led by Pastor Bobby.

◆Wednesday, Dec. 6

Pizza Project Night

5:30 P.M. at Westfield. Making Christmas greeting cards for nursing home residents in Lawrence County in cooperation with Butterfly Wish Bouquet's Christmas Flower Project.



◆Sunday, December 10

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS PARTY

9:45 A.M. at Westfield. An annual event featuring birthday cake, activities, and more.

Advent Worship: PEACE

11:00 A.M. at Westfield

Community Caroling

1:00 P.M. at Westfield. Following a light lunch, join us as we travel to visit some of our special friends in the neighborhood.

Christmas Vespers

4:00 P.M. at Orr Auditorium, Westminster College. Rev. Jim Mohr will share the message "Come Lord Jesus" with music provided by the Westminster Choirs, Wind Ensemble, Market Street Brass Quintet and Lake Brittain Brass.

Candlelight Christmas Service

6:30 P.M. and 8:30 P.M. at Harbison Chapel, Grove City College. Visit in person or watch online at www.gcc.edu/livestream under "Chapel Services."

◆Saturday, December 16

The Greatest Gift: Drama & Live Nativity

2 P.M. at Bethel Church



◆Sunday, December 17

Sunday School

9:45 A.M. at Westfield

Advent Worship: JOY

Children's Stellar Christmas Program

11:00 A.M. at Westfield

◆Friday, December 22

Blue Christmas

6:00 P.M. at Westfield

A service of remembrance and hope for the longest night of the year.

Live Nativity

7:00—10:00 P.M. at Kennedy Park in Bessemer. Relive the moment that changed history. Live actors and animals. Free hot cocoa from MoCo House



◆Sunday, Dec. 24

Sunday School

9:45 A.M. at Westfield

Advent Worship: LOVE

11:00 A.M. at Westfield

Christmas Eve Worship

7:00 P.M. Family Candlelight Celebration

11:00 P.M. Candlelight and Communion Service

Special Days in December

- 2 Scotland Spieker
- 3 Stacey Ealey
- 4 Dave Eichenlaub
- 5 Carter Ernst
 - Terry McCurley
 - Addison McDowell
 - Becky Shaffer
- 6 Lauren McConahy
- 7 Peyton Yorns
- 8 Liam Foster
 - Andy Thompson
- 9 Daniel Hopper
- 10 Shane Clark
 - Christopher Lindsay
- 12 Michelle Meyers
- 13 Jodi Hopper
 - Jim Book
- 14 Joann Drane
- 15 Alex Boston
 - Scott McClain
- 16 Taylor Osman
- 18 Jared Patton
 - Jason Patton
- 19 Ryan Palmer
- 20 Ann Fox

- 17 Janet & Cliff Wallace
- 20 Phyllis & Fred Denton
- 27 Hilary & David Spieker
- 28 Debbie & Kenny Shiderly
- 29 Anne & Tom Kephart
- 31 Shelby & David McBride

- 21 Bruce Harman
 - Carol Robb
 - Jimmy Stivers
- 24 Holly Liggett
 - Chris Lindsay
 - Becky Summers
- 25 Calvin Scott
- 27 Bryan Cunningham
 - Michelene Dickson
 - Kami Lehman
- 28 Sydney Madrid
- 29 Courtney Guido
 - Wayne Schweikert
- 30 Beth Clark
 - Delani Harman
 - Lyndsay Wilcox
- 31 Deborah Replogle





JANUARY

Birthdays

- 1 Mary McMillin
Kenneth Shiderly, Jr.
Grant McKinley
- 2 Parke Harman
- 4 Benjamin Jones
- 5 Geraldine Reese
- 6 Kerry Blakeman
Herm Cvetan
- 7 Kerri McKinley
- 9 Jeff Logan
- 10 Braedan Kerr
Lori Scott
- 11 Rachel Harman
- 14 Sawyer Fordyce
- 15 Mimi Gettemy
Mikenzi McBride
Jamie Good
- 16 Diane Shillingburg

- 19 Audrey Blakeman
Shel McClain
- 20 John Fox
Emily Sperdute
- 21 Sandy McCurley
- 22 Jennifer Byers
- 23 Sonja Gettemy
- 24 Easton Logan
Elaine Thompson
- 25 Raesha Elser
James Leslie
- 26 Dan Foster
Leroy Keim
- 27 Jalen Godfrey
Gina Koty
Ryan Palmer, Jr.
Brett Shaffer
Jennifer Thompson
Cooper Wilcox
- 29 Benjamin Wigg



JANUARY

Anniversaries

- 1 Emily & Bryan Van Tassel
- 3 Natalee & David Prestopine